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DISPATCH		CLASSIFICATION S E C R E T	DISPATCH SYMBOL AND NO. EGMA 39999
TO INFO	Chief of <input type="checkbox"/> IO, EE, WE, COS/G		HEADQUARTERS FILE NO. 200-124-39/3
FROM	Chief of Base, Munich <input type="checkbox"/>		DATE 28 January 1959
SUBJECT	DTDORIC/QKACTIVE/Operations Transmittal of PBCHORD Memo on "Developments Leading Toward Establishment of Russian Center in Brussels		RE: "43-3" - (CHECK "X" ONE) <input type="checkbox"/> MARKED FOR INDEXING <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NO INDEXING REQUIRED
ACTION REQUIRED	None. For your information		INDEXING CAN BE JUDGED BY QUALIFIED HQ. DESK ONLY

REFERENCE(S)

We are transmitting under separate cover a PBCHORD memorandum prepared by ☐ on 14 January 1959 on the subject of "Developments Leading Toward Establishment of Russian Center in Brussels." We thought that this item might be of interest to you.

Approved ☐

Attachment: A/s

Distribution:

- 2 - ☐ w/l cy att (USC)
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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2007

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200-124-39/3

FORM 10-57 53b (40)	USE PREVIOUS EDITION. REPLACES FORMS 51-28, 51-28A AND 51-29 WHICH ARE OBSOLETE.	CLASSIFICATION S E C R E T	<input type="checkbox"/> CONTINUED	PAGE NO.
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SEPARATE COVER ATTACHMENT

TO ROMA

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January 14, 1959

Director, Political Affairs Division

Director of Emigre Relations

Developments Leading toward Establishment of
Russian Center in Brussels

As has often been noted in correspondence from this office, the Russian emigration in Brussels has had at its service (or many years a sort of cultural center called Russkiy Dom ("The Russian House"). Physically speaking, the Russkiy Dom is a sort of Belgian version of Balcanovsky's Dom Svobodnoi Russii ("Free Russian House") in New York, a formerly expensive "town house" at 109 Champs-Élysées, just off the fashionable Avenue Louise. An important difference is that the Russkiy Dom has a bar and buffet-restaurant. The latter also rents office space on an upper floor to the Tolstoy Foundation.

The Russkiy Dom was founded and has been run by Grekhev, chairman of the Union of Soviet Citizens in Belgium. Its support has been attributed to a variety of sources including individual contributions, membership fees, income from the restaurant and, probably most important, a subsidy from a wealthy Belgian with former business interests in Russia.

Over the past few years, however, the Russkiy Dom has been drifting downhill. Membership, attendance and even interest among the emigrés has fallen off to a point where the house has been largely empty most of the time. The bar and restaurant have been losing rather than making money. Worst of all, the Belgian patron recently discontinued his subsidy.

Meanwhile, as has been reported regularly by this office, the Union of Soviet Citizens in Belgium, openly supported by the Soviet embassy, operates its own home and has been carrying on a schedule of social and cultural activities on an increasing scale.

During my recent visit to Brussels to close out our field's fair activities, November 17-19, I reviewed this problem thoroughly with interested local emigre figures including Grekhev himself, his son and our man Kamenov, and also Iashkin and Madame Chaperon, owner of the Librairie Slave. There was agreement by all that the demise of the Russkiy Dom would be a severe blow to the Russian emigration, that it should and could be given new life

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perform an important and useful function in serving the emigration but this would be possible only by ending its status as an RNC-Crekhov institution and creating a joint management and control representing all constituent elements of the emigration. Orekhev declared himself in full agreement with such a concept, and he and the others referred to the jointly agreed day of irreconcilability meeting at the RNC as an example of the results to be expected from joint action.

During these November discussions in Brussels, the local emigre leaders attempted to ascertain the Committee's views toward this proposed move and the extent to which we might be willing to grant financial assistance. I told them that we would naturally be in full sympathy with any move toward consolidating the strength of the emigration and creating a live, effective center in the Russkii Dom. However, the success of such a move would have to depend on their own initiative and efforts, because the Committee could not undertake to underwrite any such center on a continuing basis. I suggested that they explore all possibilities for support from among themselves. For example, I suggested that under such a joint management Madame Kornilova might wish to consolidate her Liturgicheskii Sluzhba with the RDC, thereby adding an additional source of income. I advanced the suggestion that, especially since Liturgicheskii Sluzhba does not combine with the RDC, we might consider the establishment of a branch of the Stevens Library there, giving them a monthly allowance on the order of that which we allow for other branches, in the neighborhood of 50-70 marks.

During the holidays Orekhev wrote to tell us that there had already been one meeting of a joint committee to lay plans for the establishment of a jointly operated center and another meeting was scheduled within a few days. He further advised us that he and Mamayev expected to make a trip to Germany, leaving January 3-5 in Munich, and hoped to talk to us at that time. I replied that I expected to be out of town but Mr. Melbardis would be happy to see them.

Mr. Melbardis reports that Orekhev's trip was intended primarily to obtain support for the Russkii Dom under joint management. Agreement had been reached on a governing board composed of the following individuals, acting as representatives of their respective groups:

A.I. Isaikin	- YSOFF
V.V. Orekhev	- RNC
V.M. Perekrestenko	- Union of Writers and Journalists
B.I. Tepus	- KUV
A.M. Tverbus-Tverdiy	- STC
V.A. Vronskiy	- SDOH
G.V. Zhelyabina	- RNTS

The coordinating group will serve primarily to organize social and cultural activities. It is expected that it will also work out joint anti-fascist meetings, etc. As an important by-product it will promote better understanding and serve as an indirect unifying agent.

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It is estimated that a monthly subsidy in the neighborhood of some 100 Belgian Francs (\$75 or DM 500) would be necessary to operate the Library Day on an effective scale. (We have not seen the figures which would support such an estimate, but it has been accepted by the other major elements in Brussels.) Chekhov stopped off at NTS headquarters in Frankfurt en route to Munich and apparently received assurance of a continuing subsidy in the order of DM 100 per month. In Munich, Ambassador W. H. H. H. also made a firm commitment of DM 100 monthly. It was then proposed that the American Committee grant DM 100 per month, in the form of reimbursement for a branch of the Stevens Library or working through EBOKR, or EBOKR, or both.

To give positive expression to our approval of this initiative, we agreed to the establishment, as of February, of a library branch in Frankfurt with an initial monthly payment of DM 50 (312).

We are also giving favorable consideration to making a further grant of DM 50 per month via EBOKR, thus permitting the latter to share the venture on a basis at least partially consistent with the status of the organization in Belgium. We are delaying commitment on this, however, pending clarification of the measures to permit auditing of accounts and justification of expenditures by the various participants and also to be submitted for your consideration. We trust that you will approve of the measures which we have undertaken to date and hope that you will approve of the proposed additional measure if and when our own questions are answered satisfactorily.

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